

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VICTOR 00058 161924Z

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 245

INFO: RUQMNI/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 328

S E C R E T VICTORIA 058

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, SE

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST FORCE

REF: STATE 030235

1. IT IS MY VIEW THAT SEYCHELLES GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER INDIAN OCEAN/GULF STATES, TO GRANT CLEARANCE FOR TWO WEEK VISITS BY FLAGSHIP ON TWICE A YEAR BASIS (PARA 8 REFTEL). ALTHOUGH SEYCHELLES IS OFFICIALLY NON-ALIGNED, PRESIDENT MANCHAM IS INCREASINGLY CONCERNED WITH SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN AND ITS POLITICAL INFLUENCE WITH SOME LITTORAL STATES. HE REGARDS US-UK-FRENCH NAVAL UNITS AS IMPORTANT COUNTERWEIGHT TO SOVIETS AND HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY RECEPTIVE TO WESTERN REQUESTS FOR PORT VISITS. SINCE MIDEASTFORCE CONSTITUTES ONLY PERMANENT U.S. NAVAL FORCE IN AREA, BELIEVE MANCHAM WOULD CONSIDER IT IN SEYCHELLES' INTEREST, IF NECESSARY, TO GIVE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IN THE FORM OF PROPOSED FLAG SHIP VISITS IN ORDER TO RETAIN PRESENCE.

2. WHILE GOS WOULD BE PREPARED TO SHARE IN SUPPORT OF REGIONAL MIDEASTFOR PRESENCE, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BY BAHRAINIS IDENTIFYING SEYCHELLES AS ONE OF NEW SUPPORT FACILITIES FOR FLAGSHIP COULD BE SEEN AS AN UNACCEPTABLE INFRINGEMENT ON STILL EMBRYONIC NON-ALIGNED IMAGE. PERCEIVED POLITICAL COST TO SEYCHELLES ALSO

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CONTINGENT ON PARTICIPATION OF OTHER STATES IN REGION. OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY GOS COMMITMENT FOR INCREASED MIDDLE EAST FORCE SUPPORT.

3. PORT VICTORIA HAS LIMITED SPACE ALONGSIDE SINGLE PIER. ONLY ONE LARGE OR TWO SMALL CARGO VESSELS CAN BE ACCOMMODATED AT SAME TIME. IN VIEW OF PORT FACILITIES AND INCREASED MERSHIP TRAFFIC, FLAGSHIP COULD NOT ANTICIPATE BEING ALONGSIDE PIER FOR

MORE THAN HALF OF ANY VISIT.
MATTSON

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NNN

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